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Hazardous Waste Permitting Process Standardized

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is standardizing the federal hazardous waste permitting process by simplifying certain administrative procedures, and permit renewal and modification processes. The new streamlined system reduces paperwork and saves states and industry more than \$3 million a year while maintaining stringent hazardous waste management requirements.

Action

The hazardous waste permitting process allows eligible hazardous waste facilities to submit an abbreviated permit application to regulatory authorities for review. Under the current individual permit process, facilities are required to submit a two part application. Facilities are required to submit an application consisting of general information on the facility, in addition to a lengthier, more detailed application describing the facility and the waste content, among other things. The gathering and reviewing of this data contributes to a time-intensive permit application process that often takes longer than a year.

The revised process is similar to the conventional process, yet saves EPA, states, and facilities time and money. Facilities are still required to have the pre-application meeting with the public followed by the submission of a Notice of Intent, and supporting information. Detailed facility information, normally submitted as part of the Part B application, will be stored on-site for review, if necessary. The Notice of Intent and supporting materials, in most cases, should provide sufficient information to the regulatory agency to make a draft permit decision that safeguards human health and the environment.

Under the simplified process, regulatory authorities can issue a draft permit to eligible facilities within a year of the date the application was received. Eligible facilities include hazardous waste management facilities otherwise subject to hazardous waste permitting that generate and then store or non-thermally treat hazardous waste on-site in tanks, containers, and containment buildings. Also eligible, are facilities that receive hazardous waste generated off-site by a generator under the same ownership as the receiving facility, and then store or non-thermally treat the hazardous waste in containers, tanks, or containment buildings.

The standardized permit issued to a facility will consist of two parts: a uniform portion, and when necessary, a supplemental portion. The uniform portion, required in all standardized permits, includes the general facility standards and unit specific standards from 40 CFR Part 267. The supplemental portion includes site-specific conditions unique to the facility, such as corrective action requirements, and any other requirements deemed

necessary to meet safe environmental standards. These permitting standards are effective 30 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

Background

EPA convened a special task force in 1994 to look at permitting activities throughout its different programs and to make specific recommendations to improve these permitting programs. This task force, known as the Permits Improvement Team (PIT), spent two years working with stakeholders from EPA, state permitting agencies, industry, and the environmental community. Among other things, the PIT stakeholders suggested permitting activities be commensurate with the complexity of the activity. The stakeholders felt that current EPA permitting programs were not flexible enough to allow streamlined procedures for routine permitting activities.

Consequently, the hazardous waste program convened a workgroup to develop proposed regulations for a type of general permit called a standardized permit for a certain class of hazardous waste management facility.

Impact

EPA estimates that approximately 870 to 1,130 private sector and federal facilities are eligible for regulatory relief from this rule. Taking into account both the benefits and costs of this rule, the Agency estimates the annual cost savings from potential paperwork reduction to be more than \$3 million.

For More Information

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